Process Flow Overview
SFA HR Automation

Classification:

Primary Functionality: Benefits Administration

Sub-function: Disability Retirement

☑ "As-Is"
☐ To-Be

Description:
This "As-Is" flow provides an overview of the retirement disability process. The process is semi-automated through the use of the Federal Personnel/Payroll System (FPPS), Economic Systems Inc. (ESI), and Federal Retirement Calculations (FRC Calc) software. The employee applying for disability retirement works closely with Employee Relations at HRG to gather the necessary documentation. Employee Relations submits the retirement package once it is complete to OPM for approval. If OPM does not approve the disability application, the employee can make an appeal for reconsideration. If OPM approves the disability application, the Employee Relations Specialist at HRG requests that SFA HR initiate the personnel action. HRG electronically forwards the request to FPPS in Denver and mails the complete disability retirement package to the employee and to Denver.

Handoffs:
There are 16 handoffs in the "As-Is" Disability Retirement process. Handoffs occur between: employee - Employee Relations Specialist, Employee Relations Specialist - employee, employee - Employee Relations Specialist, Employee Relations Specialist - Accommodations Coordinator, Accommodations Coordinator - Employee Relations Specialist, Employee Relations Specialist - OPM, OPM - Employee Relations Specialist, Employee Relations Specialist - SFA HR, SFA HR - employee, employee - SFA HR, SFA HR - Employee Relations Specialist, Employee Relations Specialist - A&R Technician, A&R Technician - Customer Service Team III Leader, Customer Service Team III Leader - A&R Technician, A&R Technician - Employee Relations Specialist, and Employee Relations Specialist - SFA HR.

Average Process Completion Time:
The average process completion time for processing a disability retirement case is two weeks, not including the 3-5 months that OPM needs to approve a disability case.

Position title	Agency name	Time/ request	Number of positions	Percent of time/year	Number processed/year
Accommodations Coordinator	HRG	10 min.	1	Less than 1	24*
Employee Relations Specialist	HRG	4 hrs.	2	3%	24*
Management Operations Specialist	SFA HR	15 min.	2	Less than 1	24*
Admin Officer	SFA	30 min.	7	Less than 1	6*
A&R Technician	HRG	15 min.	1	Less than 1	6*
Customer Service Team III Leader	HRG	5 min.	1	Less than 1	24*

- Includes disability retirements in regions

Cost:
- HRG inter-agency agreement for use of FPPS: $230,000 annually
- FPPS: $165 per W-2 form annually
- ESI: $175 for annual updates (excludes initial cost of ~$700)
- FRC Calc: $285 for annual updates (excludes initial cost of ~$1,000)
- SFA-sponsored FTEs: ~$255,543 (based on 3 FTEs at an average OM salary of $85,181)

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Assumptions:
- The process flow assumes that all forms submitted by the employee are complete. If certain parts of the form(s) are not filled in, HRG's Employee Relations Specialist or SFA HR will return the form(s) to the employee to complete and resubmit.
- The disability retirement process flow assumes that the SF 50 is accurate. If the Customer Service Team III Leader detects an error in the printed SF 50, then the Customer Service Team III Leader completes an error sheet and returns the SF 50 to the Employee Relations Specialist at HRG to make the necessary changes.
- Page 5.7.8 states that the employee elects TSP options and mails the completed form to the thrift savings plan office. This process step assumes that the employee has a thrift savings plan account.

Exclusions:
- When OPM does not approve a disability application, the employee can exercise appeal rights for re-consideration. If the employee chooses to, the employee can ask OPM to reconsider the application. If OPM denies disability status again, the employee can seek help from the Merit Systems Protection Board. This portion was not included in the flow because the appeals process can be lengthy and varied. First, the employee decides whether or not to seek additional help from the Merit Systems Protection Board. If the employee decides to turn the case over to the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Board would appeal OPM's decision and request reconsideration. OPM could decide to grant disability status to the employee, and the process would continue as usual, or OPM could decide to uphold its previous decision to deny the employee of disability status and the case would close.

Regions:
- The regional offices follow a slightly different procedure for processing personnel actions; refer to the Regional Process: Requesting Personnel Actions sheet for details.
- The disability retirement process is similar in the regions and in headquarters. The main difference is that the regional offices operate with a smaller staff that typically includes one Personnel Officer and one Personnel Specialist. HR employees in the regions are generalists, which means that they perform all HR functions rather than specialists in headquarters that only handle matters related to Employee Relations, Labor Relations, etc. Because there are less people involved in executing HR functions, there are fewer handoffs in the regions.
- Applications for disability retirement are extremely rare in the regions. When an employee submits an application for disability in the regions, the Personnel Officer forwards the application and the Agency Certification of Reassignment & Accommodation Efforts form to HRG's Accommodations Coordinator in headquarters. The Accommodations Coordinator in headquarters completes and returns the form to the Personnel Officer in the regions to continue the process as usual.
- The regions do not have access to Economic System Inc. (ESI) software. Instead of using this software, regional HR employees manually fill out the Certified Summary of Federal Service, the Agency Checklist for Immediate Retirement, and the Agency Certification of Insurance Status.
- Employees in headquarters have the option of participating in the FEDMER pilot instead of applying directly to the Social Security Administration. Employees in the regions are not able to participate in the FEDMER pilot. The pilot will be evaluated, and if the pilot is successful, it may be extended to the regions.

Strategic Direction:
SFA HR can use the disability retirement process flow to gain a better understanding of how disability applications are processed at HRG. This flow will help identify which steps can be automated to improve the process. After analyzing the process flow, SFA HR will also be better equipped to make an educated decision about whether or not they should bring this function in-house. If SFA HR decides that HRG should continue to perform this function, SFA HR could use the disability retirement process flow to write a strategic service-level agreement with specific guidelines to meet their needs.